

UV SAFETY MONTH

Use the talking points as sound bites. These three sentences are the most important messages we have on the issue. Below each sentence are facts to support or clarify the point above.

1. During July, UV Safety Month, the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Eye M.D.s around the country encourage everyone to protect their eyes from UV-related damage.

- The same UV-A and UV-B rays that can damage your skin can harm your eyes as well. When you protect yourself from the sun, don't just think sunscreen – think sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat.
- Excessive, prolonged UV exposure may be linked to the development of eye conditions such as cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.
- Extensive or intense exposure to UV rays can cause "sunburn" on the surface of your eye. Similar to a skin sunburn, eye surface burns usually disappear within a couple of days, but may lead to further complications later in life so protect your eyes.

2. To protect your eyes, wear a brimmed hat and the right kind of sunglasses when you are going to be exposed to UV light.

- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays.
- If you spend time on the water or in the snow, consider purchasing goggles or sunglasses that wrap around your temples because they block the sun's rays from entering on the sides, offering better protection.
- Remember sunglasses don't have to be expensive to offer the right kind of UV protection. Even inexpensive glasses can protect your eyes if they offer 99 to 100 percent UV-A and UV-B protection.
- Don't forget the kids. Protect their eyes with hats and sunglasses. In addition, try to keep children out of the sun between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when the sun's ultraviolet rays are the strongest.

3. It's important to protect your eyes when UV light is most intense.

- Generally, UV light is at the greatest level at midday (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.), but you need to protect your eyes whenever you're outside for a prolonged period, even when it's gray and overcast.
- Reflected sunlight off water, snow and pavement can be the most dangerous type of UV light because it is intensified.
- Your eyes can be harmed by UV light sources other than the sun, such as welding lamps or tanning lights. So remember to wear eye protection when using these sources of invisible, high energy UV rays.